



A SURVEY ON LEARNING OBSTACLES OF ADULT LEARNERS PURSUING EQUIVALENCY PROGRAMME IN MALAPPURAM DISTRICT (KERALA)

Dr. Sakkeer V.

Assistant Professor, School of Education and Training, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, College of Teacher Education, Srinagar- 190 005, Jammu and Kashmir.

ABSTRACT

In the present study the investigator made an attempt to assess the learning obstacles of adult learners pursuing equivalency programme in Malappuram district of Kerala. Descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The sample consist sixty adult learners and statistical technique used for the study were critical ratio and percentage analysis. Result indicate that adult learners are confronting various obstacles in their learning.

Literacy of population has a major role in the development of a nation. Developmental programmes can be successfully accomplished only through the eradication of illiterates. As a developing country like India, Lack of education or inadequate literacy is the major barrier for the implementation of developmental and welfare programmes. Moreover Illiteracy and Poverty are closely inter-related. In order to overcome this, there is a need for educating the citizen of the whole nation. Education can be imparted through formal or non-formal way. Non-formal education is mainly given to those people who have not get opportunity for formal education. As a part of non-formal education, by the recommendation of NLM, Kerala Literacy Mission launched an educational programme- Equivalency Learning programme-. "Equivalency programme as an alternate educational programme equivalent to the existing formal, general or vocational education" In order to retain the acquired literacy through equivalency classes, avenues for self employment training as well as income generating activities are also provided. This programme is aimed at the neo-literates who aspire to continue their education, which would enable them to stand on a par with others who have successfully completed their course of study in the formal system of education.

Learning is the relatively permanent change in behavior or potential behavior resulting from experience (Ebel, 1969). Learning in the classroom affects many components like student factors, contextual/environmental factors, teacher factors, student specific factors like learning style, learning strategy, learning approaches etc. At the occasion of learning some of the factors become act as an obstacle to the learner. Obstacle factors are unfavorable factors to the learner.

Learning Obstacles are the difficulties in mastering a particular subject or more likely a part of a subject due to lack of pre-requisite knowledge or interference (Rowntree, 1981). Learning Obstacles faced by the learner mainly are three types. They are personal factors, contextual factors and teacher factor. All of them affect as a barrier of learning.

Here the Learners are heterogeneous- adult, older and also mainly coming from various socio-economic status and different cultural background. The tastes, interest and family background of the learners in group are entirely different. Moreover certain number of learners will be suddenly dropped out from their education. All are in busy and have not got adequate environment for learning because they are engaged in family matters. Any type of learning should face certain problems, which will act as a barrier for achievement. Adult learners are also face plenty of problems like educational, economical, familial, physical or social. This will strongly hinder their learning and achievement. Therefore, the significance of the present study is that what and which type of problems are more influenced by the adult learners.

Is Adult learner confronting any obstacles in their learning?

Flynn and Debbie (1984) identify that low income adult have multiple barriers to learning, out of these, learning participant or participate in learning is the crucial one. By discussing the interactive nature of adult literacy and emotional maladjustment, Clabby, et al., (1985) validated a series of psychological barriers to learning – ambivalence about success, fear of risk taking, over dependence on authority figures, tension, defensive dominance and intrusive memories of poor learning experience. Study of Lake and Sara (1988) show that self directed learning- student who have mastered the basic study skill and who have a sense of conscious control over the learning task – is the way of reducing the obstacles of learning. Studies of Gagliardi (1996) focused on identifying learning difficulties with a view to incorporate both understanding of those difficulties and method for minimizing them in multi cultural classroom setting. Study of Fan and Chen (1999) reveal that parental involvement has a positive involvement as the rem-

edy by for many problems in education especially for reducing the barriers of learning.

It has been revealed from the review that studies of learning obstacles have reasonable influence on their learning and academic achievement. Classroom is the place where formal learning takes place. But learning in the classroom depends upon many factors. Learning Obstacles is a factor which influence student's learning. Learning Obstacles are the hindrances confronted by pupil during the learning situation. These hindrance may affect their learning and thereby their achievement.

From the review conducted, it was found that Learning Obstacles faced by the students in the classroom can be divided mainly in to three.

- i) Personal factors,
- ii) Contextual factors
- iii) Teacher factors.

a) Personal factors: an individual may face difficulty in learning due to many personal reasons like low ability, home environment, fear etc. These factors which influence an individual's learning and cause difficulties are termed as personal factors.

Important personal factors are lack of achievement motivation, emotional instability, negative attitude of parents, low economic background, poor physical condition, fear of failure, inappropriate learning strategy, low cognitive capacity, negative attitude towards learning, fatigue, low maturity level, lack of knowledge of result, lack of reinforcement and pathologies in learning.

b) Contextual factors: learners confront many obstacles during the learning context. The obstacles faced by the pupil during the learning situation is known as contextual factors. Important contextual factors are poor infrastructure, low level of peer interaction, high competition, low pupil- teacher interaction and poor classroom climate.

c) Teacher factors: Learners may face difficulties in learning due to many factors related to teacher. These are dominating teacher behavior, under estimation of teacher about student's ability, poor teaching strategy, less competent teacher, low teacher motivation, and negative attitude towards teaching.

Objectives of the Study

- To measure the Learning Obstacles of Adult Learners pursuing Equivalency programme based on gender and locality.
- To compare the Learning Obstacles of male and female Adult learners pursuing Equivalency programme.
- To compare the Learning Obstacles of rural and urban Adult learners pursuing Equivalency programme.

Hypotheses

- There will be significant difference between the Learning Obstacles of male and female Adult learners of Equivalency programme.
- There will be significant difference between the Learning Obstacles of urban and rural Adult learners of Equivalency programme.

Methodology

Of the various methods such as historical, experimental, case study and survey method, the investigator decided to adopt the survey method since the problem is concerned about the obstacles faced by the Adult learners during the learning process. The investigator selected the normative survey method for conducting the study.

Sample for the Study

Sixty Adult learners studying in the Angadippuram Centre, perintalmanna taluk, Malappuram District, Kerala State, based on stratified random sampling technique, to avoid bias and ensure greater representation.

Tools Used

The investigator adopted a standardized tool entitled as "Learning Obstacle Survey" (Kumar, et al., 2001) to measure the obstacles confronted by the learner during learning.

Reliability of the survey was found by using the split-half method and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.57.

The validity of the tool was estimated by criterion related technique. The correlation coefficient was found to be -0.82. The criterion used for correlation was achievement in Biology, on assumption that Learning obstacles are negatively correlated with achievement. The tool was also submitted to a panel of experts to ensure Face validity and Content validity. And the experts agreed that the tool was having Face and Content validity.

Statistical Techniques Used

The objectives and hypotheses of the present study demands the application of statistical techniques like Arithmetic mean, Standard deviation, Critical ratio and percentage for analysis and interpretation.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the learning obstacles of Adult learners pursuing equivalency programme. The data for the study were collected from the students by means of learning obstacles Survey.

Table.1
Mean and Standard Deviation of Survey Scores of Learning Obstacles of Adult Learners Pursuing Equivalency Programme

Class interval of Survey score	Frequency of Adult learners	Mean	S.D
50-55	6	64.5 (86%)	6.96
56-60	15		
61-65	6		
66-70	15		
71-75	18		

The arithmetic mean was found to be 64.5, out of total 60. It is about 86% of the total score. This indicates that Adult Learners are confronting more obstacles in their learning.

The value obtained for standard deviation is 6.96. This shows that there is high scattering of score from mean score.

Comparison of the Learning Obstacle Score of Male and Female Adult Learners Pursuing Equivalency programme

The sample consist of 30 male and 30 female learners pursuing the equivalency programme. The two groups were compared for measuring their Obstacles confronting during the learning process. The data and result of test of significance are given in Table.2.

Table.2
Comparison of the Learning Obstacle Score of Male and Female Adult Learners Pursuing Equivalency programme

Category	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	Level of Significance
Male	30	66	6.15	2.5	0.01
Female	30	62	6.6		

The mean and standard deviation of the Learning Obstacle scores of male Adult Learners are 66 and 6.15 respectively. Whereas the mean and standard deviation of the Learning Obstacle scores of female Adult Learners are 62 and 6.6 respectively. The critical ratio is 2.5, which is significant at 0.01 level. From this, it is clear that there is significant difference between the obstacles faced by Adult Learners pursuing Equivalency programme.

Comparison of the Learning Obstacle Score of Rural and Urban Adult Learners Pursuing Equivalency programme

The sample consist of 30 rural and 30 urban Learners pursuing the equivalency programme. The two groups were compared for measuring their Obstacles during the learning process. The data and result of test of significance are given in Table.3.

Table.3
Comparison of the Learning Obstacle Score of Rural and Urban Adult Learners Pursuing Equivalency programme

Category	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	Level of Significance
Rural	30	63	6.1	-1.25	0.01
Urban	30	65	6.8		

The mean and standard deviation of the Learning Obstacle scores of rural Adult Learners are 63 and 6.1 respectively. Whereas the mean and standard deviation of the Learning Obstacle scores of urban Adult Learners are 65 and 6.8 respectively. The critical ratio is -1.25, which is significant at 0.01 level. From this, it is clear that there is significant difference between the obstacles faced by Adult Learners pursuing Equivalency programme.

Conclusion:

Based on the investigation, study result reveal that Adult learners are confronting various obstacles in their learning process. Compare to female Learners, Adult learners are confronting more obstacles in their learning. Similarly, urban learners facing more obstacles than rural Adult learners. By minimising these obstacles, Adult learners can enrich the learning process and also enhance their achievement level

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